

Rendezvous

Not for these lovely blooms that prank your chambers did I come. Indeed,
I could have loved you better in the dark;
That is to say, in rooms less bright with roses, rooms more casual, less aware
Of History in the wings about to enter with benevolent air
On ponderous tiptoe, at the cue, "Proceed."
Not that I like the ash-trays over-crowded and the place in a mess,
Or the monastic cubicle too unctuously austere and stark,
But partly that these formal garlands for our Eighth Street Aphrodite are a bit too Greek,
And partly that to make the poor walls rich with our unaided loveliness
Would have been more chic.
Yet here I am, having told you of my quarrel with the taxi-driver over a line of Milton, and you laugh; and you are
you, none other.
Your laughter pelts my skin with small delicious blows.
But I am perverse: I wish you had not scrubbed--with pumice, I suppose--
The tobacco stains from your beautiful fingers. And I wish I did not feel like your mother.

(From "Huntsman, What Quarry?" 1939)